



Understanding and Assessing EPA's Public Involvement Evaluation Strategy

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Overview

- EPA's Public Involvement Policy
- EPA's PIP Evaluation Strategy
- EPA's PIP Evaluation Activities
 - Baseline Public Involvement Evaluation Survey
 - Public Involvement Feedback Tools
- Comments and critique from Mark Stephan
- Open Discussion



EPA's Public Involvement Policy

- Finalized May 2003
- Provides guidance to EPA staff
- Emphasizes 7 steps for effective involvement
- Applies to all EPA programs and activities
- Is not a rule



EPA's 7 Basic Steps for Public Involvement

- Plan and budget for involvement
- Identify interested and affected parties
- Consider technical/financial assistance
- Provide information and outreach to public
- Conduct involvement activities
- Use input and provide feedback to public
- Evaluate involvement activities



Implementing the Policy

• Goals

- enhance EPA's PI efforts
- ensure greater consistency in the ways EPA conducts its PI efforts
- enhance public understanding of EPA's mission, processes and the appropriate roles of partners, stakeholders and the public
- enhance the level of trust between EPA and the public

• Activities

- Information sharing
- Training
- Evaluation



PIP Strategy for Evaluation: Goals

1. Enable EPA to measure progress in achieving the overall goals of the PIP implementation plan
2. Enable EPA staff and managers to more effectively assess success of their public involvement efforts



PIP Evaluation Activities

1. Baseline assessment and follow-up ★
2. PI feedback tools
3. PIP tracking table
4. Regular sharing of lessons learned
5. Project specific/program evaluations for PI efforts



Baseline Assessment of Public Involvement at EPA: Purposes

1. To establish a baseline of current practices against which future PI efforts can be measured
2. To get practitioner perspective on the
 - quality of PI efforts
 - impact of PI efforts
 - obstacles to effective public involvement



Baseline Assessment of Public Involvement at EPA: Approach

- Done March 2002 to February 2003
- Survey asked 52 questions
- Surveyed 39 projects from across Agency
 - 19 regulatory projects
 - 12 site specific projects
 - 8 program development projects
- Work done by Steve Garon of SRA



Results: Project Team Experience

	Team Member Experience	Team Training
Regulatory	32%	11%
Site Specific	75%	33%
Program Development	50%	38%



Results: Correlation of Team Training and Outcome

Team Training	Success in Getting Involvement	Involvement Impact on Outcome
Yes	5.02	5.16
No	4.60	3.75

The numbers shown are based on a rating scale from 1 being the least impact to 6 being the most impact.

Results: Planning and Budgeting

- 36% of projects had PI plan
- 38% of projects had budget

Public Help Plan?	Getting Input	Outcome Impact
Yes	4.95	5.19
No	4.93	3.50



Results: How Do We Identify Affected Parties?

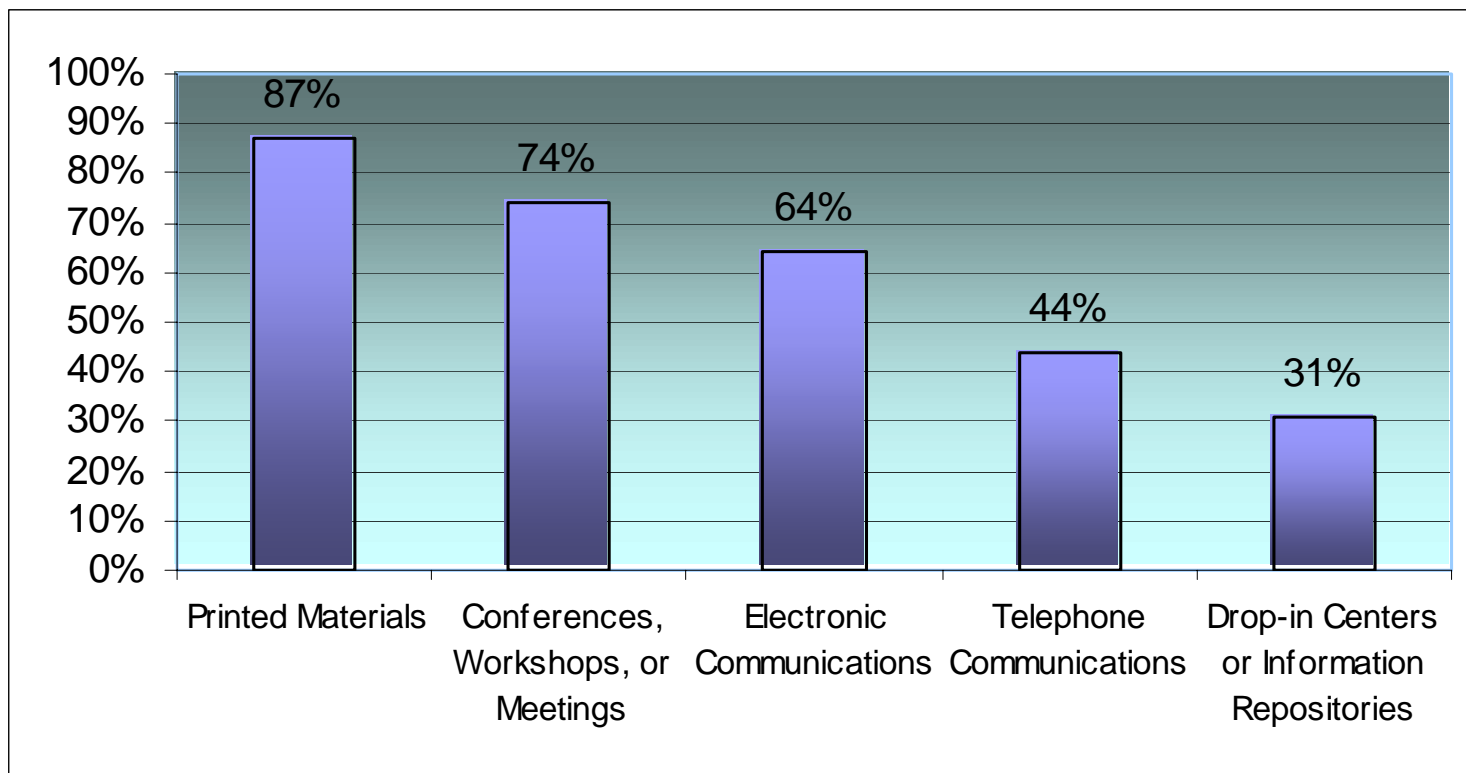
- 95% used print or broadcast notices
- 74% asked for names from others
- 38% reviewed dockets and publications
- 15% used approaches based on project factors



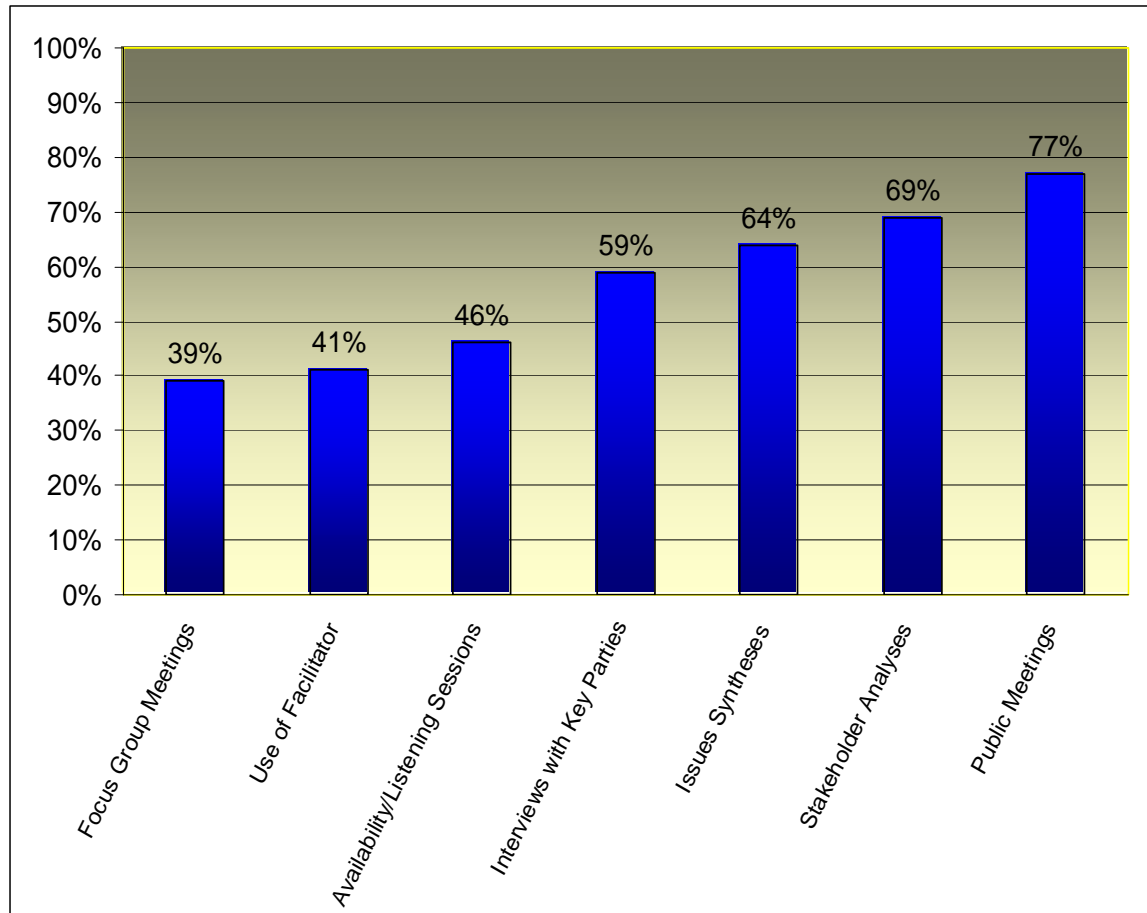
Results: Providing Technical and Financial Assistance

	Reg	SS	PD
• Agency/Contractor	21%	67%	37%
• University	5%	33%	13%
• Travel Funding	5%	42%	25%
• Information Provided	5%	58%	13%
• Other Support	16%	50%	25%

Results: Providing Information and Outreach



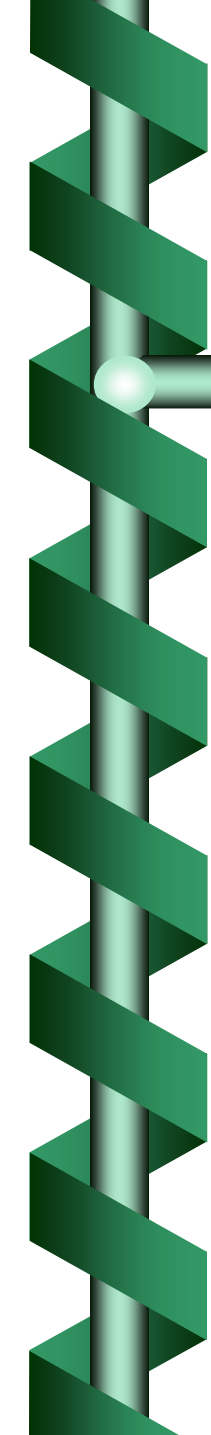
Results: Conducting Involvement Activities





Results: Obstacles to Involvement

- Internal EPA factors
- Lack of resources
- Scheduling and timing issues
- Unreasonable public expectations
- Multiple and competing stakeholder interests



Results: Use Input and Provide Feedback to Public

- 78% of respondents said that public input influenced the final decision
- In 79% of the projects, feedback was given to the public
 - 41% used public meetings
 - 36% used responsiveness summaries
 - 26% used web sites



Results: Evaluation Involvement Efforts

- A formal assessment of some PI activity was done at 41% of the projects
- An overall evaluation was done on 28% of the projects
 - 11% of regulatory projects
 - 50% of site specific projects
 - 38% of program development projects



Results: Impact of Involvement Efforts

	Increase Involvement	Affect Outcome
Regulatory	4.76	5.06
Site Specific	4.60	4.50
Program Development	5.14	4.64



Baseline Evaluation Conclusions

- Good PI does make a difference
- PI success does not happen by accident, thoughtful planning is essential
- Use adaptive responses to project situation, don't just follow checklist of routine PI activities
- Need more management commitment/support
- Improve staff capacity for PI
- Have realistic expectations



PIP Evaluation Activities

1. Baseline assessment and follow-up
2. **PI feedback tools** ★
3. PIP tracking table
4. Regular sharing of lessons learned
5. Project-specific/program evaluation for public involvement efforts



PI Feedback Tools: What's Included?

- User guide
- Ready-to-use questionnaires
(pending OMB approval)
- Data input & analysis spreadsheet program

PI Feedback Tools: Who Developed Them?

- EPA PIP Evaluation Task Group
 - Cross-office/regional group
- Consulted with other staff involved in PI activities & academics
- Currently testing & refining feedback tools



PI Feedback Tools: Purpose

- Enable EPA staff and managers to:
 1. Understand minimum expectations of performance
 2. More easily assess effectiveness
 3. Enhance efforts
 4. Enhance trust between EPA and public
 5. Improve quality of Agency decisions



PI Feedback Tools: Purpose

- Enable EPA's PIP Implementation Staff to:
 1. Better understand what is working in regards to specific types of PI activities
 2. Better understand if improvements are taking place
 3. More easily share lessons learned

PI Feedback Tools:

Types of Questionnaires

Type of Questionnaire Available by Public Involvement Activity

	Event effectiveness (participant assessment)	Event effectiveness (EPA/contractor assessment)	Post event follow-up effectiveness	Overall process effectiveness (participant assessment)	Overall process effectiveness (EPA/contractor process assessment)
Community Advisory Group	X			X	X
Federal Advisory Committee Act Groups	X			X	X
Public Meetings	X		X		
Public Hearings	X		X		
Listening Sessions	X		X		
Small Group Discussion Sessions	X	X			X
Stakeholder Negotiations				X (2) *	
Others TBD					

PI Feedback Tools:

Listening Session Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Feedback on the Effectiveness of a Listening Session Participants' Assessment

Topic of Listening Session: _____
Session Date: _____

Background

This questionnaire is designed to help Agency staff better understand what worked well and what improvements to consider implementing before holding future listening sessions. Once the data are summarized, Agency staff can assess whether goals for success were met, make modifications if necessary, and compare progress over time. Thanks in advance for taking time to fill out the questionnaire. We value your input!

Directions

To fill out this questionnaire, you will be asked to rate particular statements on a scale from 1-7 and occasionally write your own opinion to questions in the space provided. For statements such as "location was convenient", please circle the number on the scale that best reflects your opinion ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." If you have no opinion, please circle the number representing "Don't know." Please return your completed questionnaire to an EPA official before you leave or mail to within one week of this session.

1a. Pre-listening session publicity availability

Please indicate how you heard about the listening session (check all that apply):

- ☐ radio announcements
- ☐ television announcements

PI Feedback Tools:

Listening Session Questionnaire

3. Conduct of Listening Session

		Strongly disagree Disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Agree Strongly agree Don't know					
Greeters made participants feel welcome.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The registration process was efficient.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I understood the purpose of the session.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I understood how the session would be conducted.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Session planners focused on the right questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I was comfortable with the session format.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The format gave all ample opportunity to be heard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
My ideas were heard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There was good interaction among participants.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It was easy to sign up for follow-up information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
There was a good mix of viewpoints.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Data Input & Analysis: Getting Started

Getting Started		PR.1	PR.2	PR.Summary					
A	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
1									
2	Welcome to the Listening Session Data Feedback Spreadsheet Program!								
3	Do you want to make piles of filled-out questionnaire forms manageable? Are you interested in finding								
4	out whether you met performance goals for the public involvement (PI) activity you just had? Do you								
5	want to find out if you're meeting performance goals for all the same-type PI activities you led this past								
6	year? Would you like to see how performance of your PI activity at the first of the year compares to								
7	performance for the same-type PI activity you led at the end of the year? If so, you've come to the right								
8	place.								
9									
10	What's the Best Way to Get Acquainted with the Spreadsheet Program?								
11	There are three ways. The first is to scroll through and read all the questions and responses provided								
12	below. The second is to click on a question of most interest to you and go directly to relevant response								
13	. The third is to refer back to the sample spreadsheet program. By carefully looking at the different								
14	spreadsheet, you should quickly develop an overall sense of how the program works.								
15									
16									
17									
18	What's Covered on This Page?								
19	The following questions are covered on this page. Scroll through and read all the questions and								
20	responses provided below, or click on a question of most interest to you and go directly to the relevant								
21	response.								
22									
23									
24	What's included in the Spreadsheet Program?								
25	What's included in the Performance Report?								
26	What's included in the Summary Performance Report?								
27	How are the Two Reports Linked Together?								

Data Input & Analysis: Entering the Data

Getting Started PR.1 PR.2 PR.Summary											
B	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
290		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Total responses	No. that agree or strongly agree.	%
291	There was a good mix of viewpoints.	0	1	3	0	10	6	0	20	16	80%
292	I understand the "next steps" in the process.	2	1	0	1	2	14	0	20	16	80%
293	Action items were documented (flip charts).	0	2	0	1	1	16	0	20	17	85%
294	Time-frames and accountable persons were listed (flip charts).	0	1	3	0	10	6	0	20	16	80%
295	I think participants' input will make a difference.	0	1	3	0	10	6	0	20	16	80%
296	Please suggest how EPA can improve the next listening session.	Type qualitative responses in the appropriate section above.					Go to section				

Data Input & Analysis: Reporting Results

Getting Started		PR.1	PR.2	PR.Summary						
B	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	Performance Report									
2	Performance Feedback for a Single Listening Session									
3										
4	Region/Program Office	Headquarters/OPEI				Overall summary statement about listening session				
5	Office/Division	Evaluation Support Division				Turnout stronger than expected. Enthusiastic participation. Although there were areas for improvement, EPA staff pleased.				
6	Feedback coordinator	Jane Doe								
7	Contact Information	202-444-5555								
8	Topic of Listening Session	Environmental Quality								
9	Session Date	05/17/03								
10	Location	Main Street, DC								
11	Facility	Main Street Community Center								
12	Attendance	100								
13	Forms Returned	20				Recommendations for improving future sessions (if any)				
14	Response Rate	20%				1. Send out invitations six weeks in advance. 2. Reassess location of next site for convenience 3. Ensure signers and handicap access				
15	Performance Goals (#)	25								
16	Goals Met (#)	22								
17	Goals Met (%)	88%								
18	Overall Performance Goal for Listening Session Met?*	Yes								
19	*Note: Goal >= 75% of all measures met.									
20										

Data Input & Analysis: Assessing Overall Performance for Multiple Events

Getting Started \ PR.1 \ PR.2 \ PR.Summary \								
D	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
40	Overall Performance by Goal for All Listening Sessions (Cont'd)							
41	<i>Performance Goal</i>	Facility was well equipped for all planned activities (tables, etc).	Greeters made participants feel welcome.	The registration process was efficient.	I understood the purpose of the session.	I understood how the session would be conducted.	Session planners focused on the right questions	I was comfortable with the session format.
42	<i>% that agree or strongly agree</i>	80%	78%	80%	78%	76%	70%	67%
43	<i>Goal met?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
44								

Data Input & Analysis: Comparing Performance from Event to Event

130	Comparative Performance by Goal for All Listening Sessions (Cont'd)							
131	<i>Performance Goal</i>	There was good interaction among participants.	It was easy to sign up for follow-up information.	There was a good mix of viewpoints.	I understand the "next steps" in the process.	Action items were documented (flip charts).	Time-frames and accountable persons were listed (flip charts).	I think participants' input will make a difference.
132	Main Street, DC	85%	25%	80%	80%	85%	80%	80%
133	Oak City, NC	72%	54%	16%	96%	52%	22%	40%

Data Input & Analysis: Reporting Overall Performance for Multiple Events

Getting Started \ PR.1 \ PR.2 \ PR.Summary \												
D	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
1	Summary Performance Report											
2	Overall and Comparative Performance of (enter name of program office/region and division here) Listening Sessions											
3	Enter the period of time for which this performance report covers here.											
4	<input type="text"/>											
5												
6	Performance Goals (#)	25										
7	Goals Met (#)	12		Overall Performance Goal for Listening Session Met?*								No
8	Goals Met (%)	48%										Back to Get
9												
10	Overall summary statement about listening sessions											
11	<p>Overall listening sessions appear to be achieving what we expected to achieve through them. For instance... Respondents suggest that we are doing a good job at meeting participant expectations, and providing for substantive and diverse discussion opportunities. Respondents also suggest that their input is making a difference. EPA believes that the listening sessions are making a difference. For instance, we have developed a much stronger picture of local perceptions regarding the issues of _____. Participants have also put forth at least 10 proposals, of which at least five have seriously been considered by management and....</p>											
12												
13												
14												
15												
16												
17												
18												
19												
20												
21												
22	Recommendations for improving future sessions (if any)											
23	1. Send out invitations six weeks in advance.											
24												
25	2. Reassess location of next site for convenience											
26												
27	3. Ensure signers and handicap access											
28												



PIP Evaluation Strategy: Conclusions

- Evaluation Activities focused on both evaluation of Policy and providing tools for staff to conduct their own evaluations & assessments
- Should provide much better sense of how well EPA is doing public involvement and how to improve
- Limitations
- Continuous learning process



Public Involvement Policy For More Information

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Public Involvement Policy For More Information

• Resources

- Public Involvement Policy
- Framework for Implementing the Policy
 - <http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/public/index.htm>
- Summaries of Evaluations of EPA Public Involvement efforts
 - <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/toolbox/index.htm>